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Attempts to Christianize the Indians in New-England, &c.

CHAPTER II.

NUMBER XIV.

Rev. John Eliot's Life and Character as a Minister to a particular Church and Congregation, abridged from Dr. Cotton Mather—His Death, and some Circumstances preceding and attending it.

(Continued from vol. vi. p. 447.)

IN the account of Mr. Eliot, as a minister, it is proper to exhibit his sentiments respecting the frame, form and constitution of Christian churches—their officers, members, discipline, &c.

He was a Protestant and a Puritan, and one very full of that spirit, which actuated the first planters of this country, in their peaceable secession from those unwarrantable things elsewhere imposed upon their consciences.

He was a modest, humble and very reasonable nonconformist, respecting those ceremonies, which have been such unhappy apples of strife in the church of England; and had it not been for the sake of what he esteemed *true church order*, he would never have left his pleasant, native country to have settled in the dreary thickets of America.

It grieved him to see so many unscriptural ceremonies retained in the church of England by the artifice of certain persons, who were loth to have the reformation carried on to any further degrees, which the most eminent of the *first reformers* had in their pious designs.

It was his opinion, "That in the reformation of churches to be now endeavored, things ought to be reduced to the order in which we find them at their primitive, original, apostolical institution." And in pursuance of this principle he espoused that way of church government, which we call the *congregational*. He was fully persuaded, that the *church state*, which the Lord Christ has instituted in

the New Testament is in "A congregational society of professed believers, agreeing, and assembling together among themselves, with officers of divine appointment, for the celebration of evangelical ordinances, and their own mutual edification." And he could assert, "That no approved writers, for the space of two hundred years after Christ, make any mention of any other organical, visible, professing church, but that only, which is *congregational*.* He perceived, in the congregational way, an agreeable sort of temperament between *rigid Presbyterianism* and *levelling Brownism*: So that on the one side the liberties of the people are not oppressed; and on the other side the authority of the elders is not rendered insignificant; but a due balance is herein kept upon them both: And hence he closed with Cambridge Platform of church discipline, as being, in his opinion, the nearest of

what he had yet seen to the directions of heaven.

He could not comprehend, that this church state can arise from any other formal cause, but the consent, concurrence and confederation of those concerned in it. He looked upon a relation to a church, not as a natural, or a violent, but a voluntary thing; and so that it is to be entered no otherwise, but by an holy covenant; or as the scripture speaks, by "giving ourselves, first unto the Lord; and then one unto another."

But for the subjects to be admitted by churches to all the privileges of this fellowship with them, he thought they ought to be such as a *trying charity*, or a *charitable trial* should pronounce regenerate. He was of opinion, that one great end of church fellowship was to represent to the world the qualifications of those that shall ascend into the hill of the Lord, and stand in his holy place for ever. The ancient churches of New England maintained a custom to *examine those they receive, not only about their persuasion, but also, whether they had attained to a work of grace upon their souls*. In the prosecution hereof, besides the enquiries of the elders into the *knowledge, belief and conversation* of them that offer themselves to church fellowship, it is expected, though I hope, says Dr. Mather, not with any severity of imposition, that in the addresses which they make to the churches, they give a *written*, if not an *oral* account of the impressions, which the regenerating word of God has made upon their souls. This was a custom, which Mr. Eliot had a very great esteem and

* He that would see this position fairly and clearly discussed may read a book entitled, "An Enquiry into the Constitution, Discipline, Unity, and Worship of the primitive Church &c." The supposed author, if I mistake not, was Sir Peter King.—Let him particularly consult the second Chapter.—Let him also peruse, if he has opportunity, Rev. Richard Baxter's "Treatise of Episcopacy," in various parts—Mr. Pierce's *Vindication of the Dissenters* and Dr. Chauncey's *View of Episcopacy*.—Those on the other side, who are for Diocesan Episcopacy according to the Model of the Church of England, will doubtless be advised, by their Episcopal brethren, to read Bishop Hoadly's "Reasonableness of Conformity to the Church of England," and some other authors, who attempt to support the same cause.

value for. These *oral* or *written* exhibitions were usually called *relations*.*

* The custom for candidates for admission to communion to make *relations* concerning a special work of divine grace upon their hearts, was, according to Cambridge Platform, generally adopted by the churches in the Massachusetts, and I believe in Connecticut. But this usage has been gradually and at last generally laid aside; as for other reasons, so especially for this, because it was found not to answer the end particularly designed to be effected by it, to keep the churches more pure. Many ministers and private Christians were also of opinion, that to insist upon relations as a term of admission, was going *beyond the statute* of the Supreme lawgiver in the church, whatever good ends many great and pious men might mean to compass by them.

Some Divines of distinction in the seventeenth century, as well as great numbers since, dissented, in some measure, from those who compiled, and those who assented to the Platform.

Dr. Cotton Mather, in his "Ratio Disciplina", p. 85, observes, some eminent pastors, and some of their churches, are of the apprehension, "That the terms of communion are an ordinance of Christ, and must have a word of institution to warrant them. And according to the gospel, orthodoxy in the profession of the truths of the Christian religion, under which is comprised a knowledge of these truths, and this attended with a conversation that becomes the gospel of Christ, is that which is the ground of reputing them to be believers, and receiving them into our fellowship; and whatsoever more is required as a test, is beyond the statute of Christ." Yet there are some things which, though not regularly required, may, without sin, be complied with."

It is known, that in ancient times, Dr. Increase Mather of Boston, and Mr. Stoddard of Northampton, took different sides, and carried on a dispute respecting qualifications for

There were especially two things, which he was loth to see, and yet he feared he saw falling in the churches of New England: one was a thorough establishment of ruling elders in our churches, which he thought sufficiently warranted by the apostle's mention of elders, that rule well, who yet labor not in word and doctrine. He was very desirous to have prudent and gracious men set over our churches, for the assistance of their pastors in the church acts that concern the *admission* and *exclusion* of members, and the *inspection* of the *conversation* led by the communicants; and the *instruction* of their several families; and the *visitation* of the afflicted in their flocks, over which they should preside.—

communion, and terms of admission. Much, since their days, has been written upon the subject; and not a little, within a few years by the New-England ministers; but different sentiments are still maintained by good, and learned men, and probably will be, at least, till the Millennium.

Mr. Mason, in his "Student and Pastor," has given his sentiments clearly, and within a small compass upon the usage of relations, page 113, 1st edition.

I shall close this note with the candid words of Dr. I. Mather in his preface to Mr. Stoddard's Guide to Christ," which are very worthy of imitation:

"It is known, that in some points, not fundamental to religion, I differ from this beloved author. Nevertheless, as when there was a difference of opinion between Jerome and Austin, Jerome said, for all *that* I cannot but love Christ in Austin; so do I say concerning my brother Stoddard: and I pray the Lord to bless this, and all his holy labors for the conversion and salvation of many of God's elect." preface, p. 8.

Such *Helps* had he himself been blessed with. And it was tho't, that had all pastors been so well accommodated, it is possible there would have been more encouragement given to such an office as that of ruling elders.

He was concerned, that we might never want a frequent repetition of *needful Synods* in our churches. For though he had an earnest and due care to preserve the *rights of particular churches*; yet he thought all the churches of the Lord Jesus, by their *union* in what they *profess*, in what they *intend*, and in what they *enjoy*, so compacted into one *body mystical*, as that all the several *particular churches* every where, should *act* with a regard to the good of the whole, and to the common advice and counsel of the neighborhood; which cannot be done always by *letters missive*, like those that passed between *Corinth* and *Rome* in the early days of Christianity; but it requires a convention of the churches in *Synods*, by their *delegates* and *messengers*.

He did not count churches to be so independent, as that they can always discharge their whole duty, and yet not act in conjunction with neighbor churches; nor would he be of any church that will not acknowledge itself accountable to rightly composed *Synods*, which may have occasion to enquire into the circumstances of it.—He was much in contriving for the regular and repeated meeting of such assemblies.*

* During the seventeenth century there were four general Synods of all the churches in the Massachusetts, in one of which at least, there were members from Connecticut, New-Haven and Plimouth colonies. All

He wished for *Councils* to reclaim those that had imbibed pernicious principles, by applying the word of God, as a sovereign antidote—for *Councils* to heal all dangerous divisions and

the assemblies were convened upon a motion from the civil magistrate, to deliberate, and give their sentiments upon matters, in which all the churches were concerned. Mr. Eliot was doubtless of an opinion, that these Synods had answered important ends, which was a special reason of his desire, that they might be called as often as the circumstances of the churches might seem to require, or render expedient.

The first Synod was holden at Newtown, since called Cambridge, Aug. 30, 1637, to take into consideration the Antinomian and Familistical errors, which were spreading fast at that day in the Massachusetts, and threatened the ruin both of church and state—to point them out particularly—to refute them, and to guard the churches against them. Mr. Hutchinson was a principal leader of the Opinionists.

Prior to the session of the Synod, a collection was made of all the erroneous and offensive opinions, which called for the disquisitions of the assembly; though when it met, the authors of these errors were neither mentioned nor enquired after, but the errors themselves were considered.

When the Synod met, those two eminent divines, Rev. Mess. Thomas Hooker of Hartford, and Peter Bulkley of Concord were chosen moderators.

The Synod, after serious and due deliberation and discussion, drew up and published a brief, plain, scriptural refutation of the errors then prevailing, which they found subversive of the fundamentals of religion. This, together with the vigorous exertions of the Ministers upon their return to their several congregations, gave a great and speedy check to these enthusiastic and dangerous opinions.

Dr C. Mather speaks of this assembly in very honorable terms—He stiles it a most useful Synod—ob-

scandalous contentions, which might ever begin to flame in our borders—For *Councils* to rectify all male-administrations in the midst of us; or to recover any

particular churches out of any disorders, into which they may be plunged—For *Councils* to inquire into the love, the peace, the holiness maintained by the

serves, that it produced blessed effects—and further, to this purport, that the sword of the Lord, the sacred scripture, being thus wisely employed, soon did great execution.

Magnalia, B. VII. p. 14, &c.

The second Synod met at Cambridge, the latter end of the year 1646, in which were present members not only from the Massachusetts, but from Plimouth, Connecticut and New-Haven colonies. The Synod was adjourned from time to time till the 30th, of Sept. 1648, when they sat to accomplish the business upon which they were convened. The design of the Synod was chiefly to agree upon a model of church discipline. They accordingly took care, in one of their former sessions, to appoint three divines, viz. Rev. Mess. John Cotton of Boston, Richard Mather of Dorchester, and Ralph Partridge of Duxbury to draw up, each of them separately, a model of church government, out of the holy scriptures, and present them to the Synod, that the Synod, by comparing them carefully together, might form such an one out of them, as should be agreeable to the minds of all the churches. From these performances the platform of church discipline, usually called "Cambridge platform," was composed; and after many debates, agreed upon by the majority of the Synod, and presented to the general court, and to the churches for their consideration and acceptance, in the month of October, 1648.

Though it cannot be supposed, that every individual member of this assembly agreed in all the articles of the platform, yet they all *acquiesced* in it; and when it was presented to the churches, they received it.

However, in the present day, and for a long time past, the ministers, and churches in general have, in a few particular points, and with solid reason, as they suppose, differed from the Synod.

During the session of this assembly—
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bly, the Confession of Faith, set forth by the assembly of divines at Westminster in England, was deliberately read over, and adopted as scriptural. To exhibit such a Confession of Faith was one thing, which the government recommended to this venerable assembly. This they judged the churches beyond sea would expect of them. Accordingly a unanimous vote passed in the words following, viz. "This Synod having perused and considered, with much gladness of heart, and thankfulness to God, the confession of faith published by the late reverend assembly in England, do judge it to be very holy, orthodox and judicious in all matters of *faith*; and do therefore freely and fully consent thereunto for the *substance* thereof. Only in those things which respect church government and discipline, we refer ourselves to the platform of church discipline agreed upon by this present assembly. And we do therefore think it meet that this Confession of Faith should be commended to the churches of Christ among us, and to the honored court, as worthy of their due consideration and acceptance.

Magnalia, B. v. p. 1. and 21. &c. Neal's History, Vol. 1. p. 291.

The third Synod, consisting of Elders and Messengers of all the churches within the jurisdiction of the colony of the Massachusetts, was held at Boston in the month of September, 1662, by the desire, and order of the general court, having the necessity of the matter laid before them.

Two questions were propounded to them by order of the court, viz.

I. "Who are the subjects of Baptism?"

II. "Whether, according to the word of God, there ought to be a consociation of churches; and what should be the manner of it?"

As to the first question at least, people through that colony, as well as the neighboring, were much divided in sentiment, in respect to the

several churches.—In fine, for *Councils* to send forth fit laborers into those parts of our Lord's harvest, which are without the gospel of God. He beheld an

apostolical precept and pattern for such *Councils*; and when such *Councils*, convened in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, by the consent of several church-

answer to be returned. They were at no loss as to infant baptism: For the early planters and their children were almost universally Pedobaptists. But the question which was warmly debated at that day was, whether baptism is to be administered to any infants, except to those, one of whose parents, at least, belong to, and attend the communion of the Lord's Supper; or are communicants?

To the first question the Synod gave a lengthy and elaborate answer, which was in substance as follows:

"Church members, who were admitted in minority, understanding the doctrine of faith, and publicly professing their assent thereto; not scandalous in life, and solemnly owning the covenant before the church, wherein they give up themselves, and children to the Lord, and subject themselves to the government of Christ in the church, their children are to be baptized."

They conclude with this proposition, "The members of orthodox churches, being sound in the faith, and not scandalous in life, and presenting due testimony thereof; these occasionally coming from one church to another, may have their children baptized in the church, whither they come, by virtue of communion of churches." The reasoning, by which they endeavor to support the propositions they lay down, may be seen in Dr. Mather's *Magnalia*, and one edition at least, of the Cambridge Platform.

The Synod also expressed their sentiments in favor of the consociation of churches, but with such explanations and limitations, as should render their acts consistent with the powers and privileges of particular churches.

More than seven to one voted the answer to the *first question*. But several reverend and learned persons in that assembly dissented. These different sentiments occasioned a con-

troversy in print. Mr Chauncey, president of Harvard college, and Mr. Increase Mather, wrote against the resolution of the Synod, as it related to baptism. Mr. Davenport of New-Haven wrote a piece on the same side.—Mr. Allen of Dedham, Mr. Richard Mather of Dorchester, and Mr. Mitchel of Cambridge, wrote in defence of the propositions respecting the subjects of baptism.* Mr. Increase Mather, some time after, changed his sentiments in consequence of Mr. Mitchel's arguments communicated in a letter; and then wrote in defence of what he formerly opposed.†

Different sentiments, concerning the subjects of baptism, have been embraced by ministers and churches in the several periods from the time of the Synod to the present day. This controversy has not ceased in the churches. Happy if all debates upon this, as well as other heads, may be conducted with meekness of wisdom; and that all may soon arrive at such a knowledge of, and such a regard to the sacred rule, as that none may be admitted to this privilege, whom the Supreme Lawgiver forbids; and none excluded, who ought to be received according to his fixed rules.

The fourth Synod was convened at Boston, September 10, 1679.

Religious persons observed with grief and anxiety, that people began more notoriously to forget the errand of their fathers into the wilderness; and that the enchantments of this world caused the rising generation more sensibly to neglect the primitive designs and interests of religion propounded by their fathers. And upon this a change in the tenor of the divine dispensations towards this country was quickly the matter of every body's observation. The colony had, in several preceding years, suffered various calamities. The fruits of the

* *Magnalia*, book v. p. 63, &c.

† *Magnalia*, book v. p. 81.

es concerned in mutual communion, have declared, explained, and recommended the mind of God from his word unto us; he reckoned a truth so delivered,

challenged an observation from the particular churches.

The reader has now seen the character of an excellent minister of the New Testament de-

earth in successive years, had been much cut off by droughts, blasts, insects, and in other ways. Merchants experienced great losses by the shipwreck of many of their vessels; by the capture of others, and of the seamen; by fires breaking forth in the chief seats of trade at home, which greatly wasted their property. Pestilential sicknesses sometimes became epidemical by contagious vapors in the air. The wars of the savages added greatly to the distresses; and indeed far exceeded all the other temporal calamities united: For in these wars the barbarous Indians cruelly butchered many hundreds of the inhabitants, and scattered whole towns with miserable ruins.

The general court of the Massachusetts was prevailed with to convene a Synod of the elders and messengers of the churches for the solemn discussion of these two questions, viz:

I "What are the evils, that have provoked the Lord to bring his judgments on New England?"

II. "What is to be done, that so these evils may be reformed?"

Prior to the meeting of the Synod, the churches kept a general fast, that the gracious presence and Spirit of God might be obtained for the direction of the approaching assembly. The Synod met and chose Mr. John Sherman of Watertown, and Mr. Urias Oakes, Minister of Cambridge and president of Harvard College, as joint moderators during the greatest part of the session. The Synod kept a day of fasting and prayer before the Lord, and spent several days in discoursing upon the two great questions laid before them. A committee was then appointed to draw up the mind of the assembly. This being done, it was distinctly and repeatedly read, and then upon mature deliberation, the whole was unanimously voted as to the substance, end and scope thereof.

The Synod in answer to the first question, pointed out various evils prevailing in the land viz: A great and visible decay of the power of Godliness among many professors in the churches—Pride, discovering itself in various ways; by refusing to be subject to order, by unreasonable and unchristian contentions, and by apparel. Again, divine institutions, hearing the word, baptism, the Lord's Supper, and Christian discipline are greatly neglected. The holy and glorious name of God has been profaned by oaths and imprecation in ordinary discourse, and by irreverent behavior in the solemn worship of God. There is much sabbath breaking—There is much amiss in many families; reading the scriptures, family prayer, instruction, and government are much neglected—inordinate passions, and sinful heats are too prevalent even among church members; hence law-suits are frequent to the scandal of their holy profession.—There is also much intemperance in drinking, which leads on a train of many natural and moral evils—There are also heinous breaches of the seventh command, temptations to which are become too common.—There is much want of truth among men; promise breaking is a common sin; and party falsehoods too frequent.—The Synod also mention an inordinate affection to the world, discovering itself in various ways—by fraud, oppression, and strait-handedness with reference to public and pious concerns. There has also been opposition to the work of reformation; and great incorrigibleness under all the means which God has used to reduce sinners from the error of their ways. A public spirit is greatly wanting in the most of men: Too many seek their own, not the things that are Jesus Christ's. In fine, there are sins against the gospel, whereby the Lord has been provoked. No sins more provoke the Lord than impeni-

lineated. Mr. Eliot was a burning and shining light ; but we shall soon see him extinguished.

When he began to draw near his end, he grew still more

tency and unbelief. There is great unfruitfulness under the means of grace, and that brings the most desolating judgments.

This is the sum of the evils, which the Synod point out as having provoked the Lord to bring his judgments on New England.—To the Question.

II. What is to be done, that so these evils may be reformed ? The Synod return an answer, a breviate of which follows:

It would tend much to promote the interest of reformation, if all, that are leaders, either as to civil, or ecclesiastical order, do, as to themselves and families, become very exemplary.

It is recommended, that the present generation declare their adherence to the faith and order of the gospel, according to what is in the scripture expressed in the platform of discipline.

It is requisite, that persons be not admitted to communion in the Lord's supper, without making a personal and public profession of their faith and repentance, in such way, as shall be to the just satisfaction of the Church; and that both elders and churches be duly watchful and circumspect in this matter.

In order to a reformation it is necessary, that the discipline of Christ, in the power of it, should be upheld in the churches. This would have a happy tendency to prevent evil, or recover from it.

It is requisite that utmost endeavors should be used for a full supply of officers in the churches according to Christ's Institution.

It is incumbent on the magistrate to take care, that these officers have due encouragement and maintenance afforded to them. Magistrates, and that in scriptures referring to New Testament times, are said to be the churches' nursing-fathers. *Isai. xlix. 23.*

Due care and faithfulness with respect to the establishment and

heavenly, more savory, more divine. The grace of this excellent man rather increased than abated, when every thing else was dying with him.

execution of wholesome laws would very much promote the interest of reformation. Such laws, we mean, as there is scripture warrant for.

Solemn and explicit renewal of covenant is a scripture expedient for reformation. This, by the experience of ancient reformers, has been found an happy measure to promote reformation, and revive religion when much decayed.

In renewing of covenant it is needful, that the sins of the times should be engaged against, and reformation thereof, in the name, and by help of Christ, promised before the Lord.

It seems to be most conducive to edification and reformation, that in renewing covenant, such things as are clear and indisputable, be expressed; that so all the churches may agree in covenanting to promote the interest of holiness, and close walking with God.

As an expedient for reformation it is good that effectual care should be taken respecting all schools of learning. As we desire that reformation and religion should flourish, it concerns us to endeavor, that both the College, and all other schools of learning in every place be duly inspected and encouraged.

In fine, inasmuch as a thorough, and hearty reformation is necessary in order to obtaining peace with God; and all outward means will be ineffectual to that end, except the Lord pour down his Spirit from on high; it doth therefore concern us to cry mightily to God, both in ordinary and extraordinary manner, that he would be pleased to rain down righteousness upon us.

The Synod having paid particular attention to the questions proposed, presented their answer to the general court, who by an act of Oct. 15. 1679, "commended it to the serious consideration of all the churches and people in the jurisdiction; enjoining, and requiring all persons in their respective capacities, to a careful and

It is too usual with aged men, that when they are past work, they are least sensible of their inabilities and incapacities ; and can scarce endure to see another

diligent reformation of all those provoking evils mentioned therein, according to the true intent thereof ; that so the anger and displeasure of God, many ways manifested, might be averted ; and his favor and blessing obtained."

It cannot be supposed that a reforming Synod could accomplish a universal reformation.—Nevertheless it must be mentioned to the glory of God, that the admonitions of the Synod were not without desirable effects upon many. Faithful ministers were thereby strengthened and emboldened in testifying against the sins of the times ; and private Christians were awakened unto a more exact walk with God. No part of the recommendations of the Synod had more happy effects than the renewal of the covenant, which was attended by many of the churches ; in some by the communicants only : in others by baptized persons who had not come to the communion, joining with the communicants, and very remarkable was the blessing of God upon the churches which renewed covenant, not only by a great advancement of holiness in the people ; but by a great addition of converts to their holy fellowship.

The Massachusetts colony was not alone in such essays of reformation ; but the colonies of Plymouth and Connecticut showed themselves in like manner concerned, that they might avert the tokens of the divine displeasure. The rulers both in church and state had their serious deliberations with one another ; and they together enquired of the Lord, at the oracle of his written word, what might be the grounds of the divine controversy. The ministers drew up the results of their deliberations, which the magistrates recommended to the consideration of the inhabitants of the several jurisdictions ; and the pastors of the churches earnestly endeavored to prosecute the ends of these admonitions.—*Magnalia B. v. p. 85. 96.*

succeeding them in any part of their office ; but Mr. Eliot was of a temper quite contrary to this : for finding, almost two years before his decease, that he had not strength enough to edify his congregation with public prayers and sermons, he importuned his people with some impatience, to call another minister ; professing himself unable to die with comfort, until he could see a good successor ordained, settled and fixed among them. For this cause he preferred earnest petitions unto the Lord Jesus Christ, our ascended Lord, that he would grant such a gift to Roxbury ; and he sometimes called the whole town together to join with him in a fast for such a blessing. As a return of their supplications, our Lord quickly bestowed upon them a person young in years but old in discretion, gravity and experience.—It was Mr. Nehemiah Walter, who being, by the unanimous vote and choice of the church there, become the pastor of Roxbury, (being ordained October 17, 1688,) immediately found the venerable Eliot embracing and cherishing him with the tender affections of a father. The good old man, like aged Aaron, as it were, disrobed himself with an unspeakable satisfaction, when he beheld his garments put upon a son so dear to him. After this, he, for a year or two before his translation, could scarce be persuaded to any public service ; but humbly pleaded, what none but he would ever have said, " It would be a wrong to the souls of the people for him to do any thing among them, when they were supplied so much to their advantage otherwise." It is thought,

that the last sermon he ever preached was on a public fast, when he fed his people with a very distinct, and useful exposition of the eighty-third Psalm : and he concluded with an apology, begging his hearers to "pardon the poorness, meanness and brokenness, (as he called it,) of his meditations ; but added, my dear brother here will, by and by, mend all."

But though he thus dismissed himself, as one so near to the age of ninety might well have done from his public labors ; yet he would not give over his endeavors in a more private sphere to do good unto all. He had always been an enemy to *idleness* ; and was troubled when he saw how much precious time was devoured about things which do not profit : and now he was grown old, he was desirous of being actively useful to the last : the less time he saw left, the less was he willing to have lost. Sometimes he would say, with an air peculiar to himself, "I wonder for what the Lord Jesus Christ lets me live : he knows that now I can do nothing for him." And yet he could not forbear *essay*ing to do something for his Lord : He imagined that though the *English* could not be benefitted by any gifts, which he now fancied himself to have only the ruins of ; yet who can tell, but the *Negroes* might ? He had long lamented it with a tender passion, and sometimes with an ardent one, that the English used their *Negroes* but as their *horses* or their *oxen* ; and that so little care was taken about their immortal souls. He looked upon it as a prodigy, that any, wearing the name of Christians, should so much have the heart of

infernal spirits in them as to prevent and hinder the instruction of the poor *blacks*, and confine the souls of their miserable slaves to *destroying ignorance*, merely for fear of thereby losing the benefit of their vassalage : but now he made a motion to the English, within two or three miles of him, that at such a time and place, they would send their *Negroes* once a week to him ; for he would catechise them and enlighten them in the things of their everlasting peace : however, he did not live to make much progress in this undertaking.*

He also projected plans of more private charity, that he might be useful to the extent of his bodily strength and mental abilities ; but death soon put an end to these good designs and attempts.

The prosperity of the churches of Christ lay constantly near his heart ; and the care of them was the last thing he put off. With an apostolical temper he was continually solicitous about them ; but he was not so solicitous, as to distrust the guardianship of Divine Providence. He indeed used most affectionately to bewail the death of *all* useful men, whether in church or state ; yet if one brought him notice of such a thing with any despondencies ; or said, "O sir, such an one is dead, what shall we do ?" He would answer, "Well, but God lives ; Christ lives ; the old saviour of New-England yet lives ; and he will reign, till all

* Mr. Eliot was born about the year 1604, and died, May 20, A. D. 1690 in the 86th year of his age, having ministered to the church of Roxbury almost sixty years.

his enemies are made his footstool."

He had in the latter scenes of life, and quite to the last, a firm hope and almost unshaken assurance, that he was prepared for death, and should soon enter into the joy of his Lord. He would often speak of his dissolution with freedom and complacency. For many months before he died, he would often cheerfully tell his intimate friends, "That he was shortly going to heaven, and that he would carry a deal of good news thither with him. He said, he would carry tidings to the old founders of New-England, who were now in glory, that church-work was yet carried on among us—that the number of our churches was continually increasing; and that the churches were still kept as big as they were, by the daily additions of those who shall be saved."

While he was making his retreat out of this evil world, his discourses from time to time ran upon *the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ*; of this he prayed, and for this he longed. At last his Lord for whom he had been long wishing, long preparing, and long ready, came and gratified his ardent desires.

He fell into some languishments attended with a fever, which in a few days brought him into the *pangs*, (may I say, or joys) of death: and while he lay in these, his colleague, Mr. Walter, coming to him, he said to him, "Brother, thou art welcome to my very soul; pray retire to thy study for me; and give me leave to be gone;" meaning that he should not, by petitions to heaven for his life, detain him here.

Mr. Eliot, after much speech

of and for God in his life time, uttered some things little short of oracles on his death bed; and it is matter of regret that they were not more exactly regarded and recorded. Those that have taken the pains to collect the remarkable sayings of the dying have been very serviceable to the living: But the speeches of a dying Eliot must have had in them a grace and strain truly extraordinary. Many were the gracious words which he dropped: His last breath was employed in the service of that God to whom he had dedicated his life; but sufficient care was not taken to transmit his dying speeches to posterity. He closed life with great serenity. Some of his last words were, *welcome joy!* And as he expired, he called upon those that stood by in these important words, *pray, pray, pray*; which was a devout exercise, in which he employed a large portion of his time thro' a long life; and to which he excited others with his dying breath.

"Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace."

"The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance."

(To be continued.)

A concise view of some of the reasons, why the Holy Scriptures are held in high estimation, and greatly delighted in, by the godly.

THE fact, that the truly pious set a high value on the word of God, and peruse and study the scriptures with great delight, is sufficiently at-

tested by those sacred writings. The Psalms of David in particular, abound with strong and expressive declarations of this import. Of the blessed, the godly man, it is affirmed in the first Psalm, "His delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night." And in the hundred and nineteenth Psalm the pious penman says expressly, "My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times. Thy testimonies also are my delight and my counsellors. I will delight myself in thy commandments which I have loved. Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage. The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver. O how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day. I love thy commandments above gold, yea above fine gold. Mine eyes prevent the night watches, that I may meditate in thy word. I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil."

Such is the language of the truly pious heart with respect to the word of God contained in the scriptures: Such his esteem of them and delight in them. And well it may be. There are abundantly sufficient reasons for it.—For

I. The Bible gives the most important information of any book in the world. It makes the most important discoveries, and is the means of conveying to the mind the knowledge of the most important and infinitely interesting truths and objects.

More particularly,

1. It reveals the infinitely glorious character and perfections of God, and his grand de-

signs, in a vastly clearer manner than they are otherwise revealed, and is the means of conveying to the mind vastly more clear and just and exalted ideas thereof, than are ordinarily conveyed by any other medium. Though the eyes are opened by the spirit, to behold these wondrous things; yet the word of God is the medium by which they are seen, when the eyes are opened.

Mankind are principally indebted to the scriptures for the knowledge of the only true God. This might be clearly proved by facts. The scriptures teach, with the greatest plainness and decision, that there is one, and but one living and true God, the creator, preserver, proprietor, lord and governor of heaven and earth and all that is therein. And according to the scripture representations of the one true and living God, he is a being of absolute, unlimited perfection—possessed of every possible excellence both natural and moral in infinite perfection. These sacred writings present us with the idea of a God, who is eternal, independent and self-existent, omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent, infinitely and unchangeably wise and holy, just and good, true and faithful, gracious and merciful—a just God, and a Saviour—the hater of sin, and, at the same time and in perfect consistence with himself, the Saviour of sinners.

Such an idea of God hath never been entertained by mankind in any part of the world, in any age, country or nation, savage or civilized, where it has not been derived, either mediately or immediately, from the scriptures, or from the divine

revelation which is now exhibited in the scriptures. But in every age and nation in every part of the known world, they who have formed their ideas of Deity, without any assistance from this source, have entertained ideas extremely irrational and absurd, low and despicable, and even vile and abominable.—Hence, I conceive, we have a clear proof that the scriptures contain a divine revelation—that they are the word of God.

This information, which the scriptures give us, of the one living and true God, is certainly of the highest importance. And on this account they are held in the highest estimation by the godly; and their delight is in them.

2. The word of God is the means of conveying a vastly more clear, just and perfect knowledge or idea of the rule of duty in general, and in all particular cases and circumstances, conditions, characters and relations, than is revealed by any other external medium. This renders the Bible a precious book to the godly, which they read, and hear, and think upon, with great delight.

3. The word of God contains very important and interesting information respecting ourselves, or our own character and state. It teaches with great plainness what creatures we are by nature and practice, what our character is, as seen by God, and in what a condition we are. Right ideas of our own character and state are certainly of great importance.

4. The scriptures also discover and reveal the only possible and an infinitely excellent and glorious way of salvation

for us, guilty, self-ruined, self-destroyed creatures, and plainly distinguish it from all those false and destructive ways, to which we are naturally inclined, exposed, or liable—a way absolutely undiscoverable without supernatural revelation.

By the word of God the all-glorious Redeemer and Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, is placed in clear view before us, as having made a complete atonement for sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness, and as being able to save to the uttermost all those who come unto God by him. It therefore gives a plain and satisfactory answer to the most distressing, important and interesting inquiry, “Wherewith shall we come before the Lord, and bow ourselves, with acceptance, before the high God?” The divine word teaches how such as are dead in trespasses and sins may be made alive unto God—how a guilty creature may be accepted and treated as though he was righteous, by a just and holy God—yea, how he may become really righteous and holy, and how they who deserve eternal death may become partakers of, and inherit eternal life.

What information can more highly interest us than this?—But this leads me to say,

5. The word of God describes the character—the temper, spirit and practice of such as are in the way to salvation, and may warrantably view themselves as being in a state of peace and acceptance with God, and heirs of eternal life. On this account it is greatly helpful to the people of God, and highly esteemed and rejoiced in by them.

6. It reveals and declares the

certainly of a future state of retribution, and most clearly and strikingly marks the infinite difference and contrast between that of the righteous and that of the wicked.

7. It clearly and fully ascertains a universal, determining, decisive providence, directed by infinite wisdom, holiness, justice, goodness and faithfulness. It therefore proves, that all things shall finally issue in the greatest glory and happiness of the moral system, and actually shows, in some measure, how the evils which take place, are and will be made subservient to this end, and helps to account for many things very surprising and perplexing, and otherwise utterly unaccountable.

Thus the word of God, on account of the infinitely important discoveries which it makes, and of the most necessary and important knowledge which it is the great medium of conveying, and which is not to be expected, to be sure in ordinary cases, without the help of this medium, is indeed of unspeakable value and importance.—

Were we wise for ourselves, we would all cordially concur in the resolution expressed by Dr. Watts, in the following lines—

“ Nor shall thy word be sold,
“ For loads of silver well refin’d,
“ Or heaps of choicest gold ”

And such in fact is the value which the godly set upon the word of God, and so great their esteem of it and delight in it, that no worldly treasures whatsoever, not all the riches of the earth, could induce them to part with and be wholly divested of this inestimable treasure.

Under this first general observation, it might have been remark-

ed with propriety, that the bible, *considered as a history*, is the most ancient and comprehensive, authentic and infallible, instructive and useful, necessary and important, and, to the godly, the most entertaining and satisfactory, of any in existence.—

But I proceed to observe,

II. The word of God is highly deserving of esteem and worthy to be delighted in, on account of the exceeding great and precious promises which it contains.

The great and precious promises contained in the scriptures are very numerous, and admirably adapted for the direction, encouragement, support and consolation of the people of God in all their exigences, in all conditions and circumstances, and under all the variety of trials, afflictions and sufferings through which they are called to pass in the present life. These promises import, that God hath graciously condescended to engage, that they shall receive all the grace really needful and best for them, on the whole, upon properly asking it of him—that he will not suffer them to be tempted above what he will enable them to bear—that he will never leave them nor forsake them—that nothing shall separate them from his love—that they shall be finally delivered from all evil—yea that all things shall work together for good to them that love him—that such as forsake all for Christ’s sake and the gospel, though they suffer persecutions, shall receive an hundred fold, now in this time ; and in the world to come, eternal life—that they shall be kept by the power of God thro’

faith unto salvation—that he will guide them by his counsel, and afterward receive them to glory, &c.

How ineffably precious and animating, entertaining and delightful, to the believing and faithful, must these and such like most gracious promises render the holy scriptures in which they are exhibited in great abundance, and variously expressed in strong and decisive language!

III. The people of God highly esteem and greatly delight in his word, because it is an important medium of their correspondence and communion with him. And,

IV. Because it is not only subservient to the conviction and conversion of sinners, but also a great means of promoting the sanctification and growth of the godly.

Christians, “with open or unveiled face, beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the spirit of the Lord.” They accordingly “desire the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby.”

On the whole, it may be said in general terms, that the holy scriptures are highly esteemed and greatly delighted in by the godly, because they contain and exhibit the *only rule*, which God hath given to direct us, how we may glorify him, and enjoy him for ever; and are greatly instrumental, conducive and subservient to this highest and last end of our being.

Is not this implied in Paul's words to Timothy? viz. “That from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are

able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work.”

They who view the word of God in the light which has been mentioned, and highly esteem and delight in it for the reasons which have been stated, will, as the natural consequence, make it a subject of their daily meditation and study. Hence, therefore, we may pertinently remark,

1. Distaste to the scriptures, and indisposition to attend to them, argue a great degree of spiritual blindness, and a very corrupt and vitiated moral taste.

2. They who set but a small value upon the scriptures, and find it rather irksome and painful, than agreeable and pleasurable, to read and hear them, and meditate on the things which they reveal, teach and inculcate, appear to be greatly deficient in one of the distinguishing characteristics of the pious, the truly blessed and happy man.

3. To be deprived of the use of the scriptures, and secluded from the instructions derived from them, would be to the godly a sore trial indeed! and to any of mankind such a deprivation would be in reality, however they might view it, a great calamity, an awful judgment. As such it appears to have been threatened by God to Israel by the prophet Amos. “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine

in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord : and they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east ; they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it." Amos viii. 11, 12.

4. When, in some, there is a growing hatred and malignity toward the scriptures, producing great efforts to destroy their influence and to render them generally despised and rejected—when, by considerable numbers, they are held in contempt—and when they are becoming, in any place or country, more and more generally disregarded and neglected, religion, and even morality, is on the decline, and the state of things exhibits a very threatening aspect, and that in particular with respect to the rising generation, and loudly calls for the most engaged exertions of the friends of truth, to preserve the faith once delivered to the saints.

Thoughts on the Divine Government.

NO. III.

(Continued from vol. vi. p. 456.)

THAT the Lord reigns, is at once a most joyful and instructive consideration. It is an assurance which the Christian would not exchange for the uncontrolled possession of the universe. All the duties and the comforts of religion spring from this root. This needs only to be duly realized and applied, to check every murmuring sigh—to soothe every turbulent pas-

sion—to smooth the furrowed face of affliction, and produce the sweet smile of resignation. Here is a sovereign balm for every wound, a cordial for our fears. Here every unbelieving doubt may be solved, every feeling of anxiety removed ; and though we cannot unveil the mysteries of providence, for, *clouds and darkness are round about him* ; yet, that faith which overcomes the world, will fully conquer our natural jealousy and distrust of God, and triumph in the assurance, that *righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne.*

However dark and mysterious the providences of God may appear to us, under any circumstances, because we are unable to discern their immediate tendency, connection and design ; yet that which is the most important for us to know, as more especially affecting our duty and interest, viz. the general tendency of the divine government—the principles upon which it is administered, and the ultimate end to which it is directed, are revealed and made known to us. These are clearly contained, either expressed, or implied, in those emphatical words, we have taken for our theme, *righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne.* These important points are involved in no mystery. All the clouds and darkness resting upon them, are dispelled by the light of divine revelation—so that they are clear and visible to the eye of faith, and present a rich source of comfort and instruction to the believing and understanding heart. To the serious, contemplative mind, this subject forcibly impresses the following points of

important practical instruction, viz.

1. If righteousness and judgment be the habitation of God's throne, then no one of his dealings with his creatures, is such as affords them the least ground to complain of tyranny or injustice. A government that is exercised in righteousness, is conducive to the general happiness, and is therefore deserving of the esteem and confidence of all its subjects.

The three great requisites of a perfect government, are *wisdom, goodness, and power*.—*Goodness*, to be actuated by a benevolent regard to the happiness of the subjects—*wisdom*, to devise the best plans for effecting the best ends; and *power*, sufficient to put in execution the plans thus devised. It is only through the deficiency of some, or all of these, that any government ever fails of answering the highest and best end, the promotion and security of the general good and happiness of its subjects. If *wisdom* be wanting, the measures of government, however well intended, and however faithfully executed, yet, as they are laid in ignorance and folly, must prove abortive, and fail of their end.

If *goodness* be wanting, wisdom would be but craft and cunning, and power terminate in tyranny.

If *wisdom* and *goodness* both were wanting, government would be dreadful in proportion to its power—it would become a perfect despotism, and be directed to no other end, but the misery and ruin of its subjects.

If *power* were wanting, government would be but a name; the best laws would not be exe-

cuted; wisdom and goodness would be exercised in vain, and operate to no end.

But these three united constitute the perfection and happiness of government, and exclude the possibility of tyranny and oppression. And who can doubt of these requisites of supreme magistracy belonging to that great and good being, who is infinite in every perfection? The sovereignty of God, therefore, is not oppression and despotism. It doth not represent the most high as an almighty tyrant sporting with the happiness of his subjects, without reason or rule, but because he hath power to do it. Earthly sovereigns may, and often do want wisdom, or goodness, or both—yet *sovereignty* hath no connection with folly and malevolence, and implies no such imperfections in the character and government of the most high God.

2. If righteousness and judgment be the habitation of God's throne, then we may know, for certain, that whenever God in his providence, visits us with corrections, the rod is an assured token of his holy displeasure against us for our sins—that we are guilty creatures in his sight, and deserving of his frowns and chastisements. If the divine government be administered in righteousness, this inference is most certain and unavoidable. The subject cannot be viewed in any different light. It would be perfectly inconsistent with reason. A good father will not be displeased with, nor correct an *innocent* child—one who has never offended him—never transgressed his will. It is sin only which excites the anger of God, and draws down the judg-

ments of heaven upon the children of men. It is that abominable thing which is the parent of every evil we suffer. Sin shuts us out from the favorable presence of God, and veils the face of our heavenly Father with threatenings and frowns. It is sin which draws the sword of justice against the finally impenitent and kindles the unquenchable flames of hell.

"Hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it," saith God by the prophet. Observe, it is not only to be felt, but *heard*. The rod is not only an instrument of pain, but a medium of communication from God to man. The rod is represented as speaking while it wounds, and instructing while it afflicts. It speaks in a language more clear, determinate and forcible than words. And what is the import of its language, or the instruction it gives? Can any one be at a loss? Does it not speak to the ear of reason, and common-sense, as well as of faith? What does the rod of an earthly parent say in the act of correcting his child? What does it give spectators to understand? What language does it speak to the child? The same which our heavenly Father expresses by his rod, and which he has declared in his word to be the language, end and design of it.—His rod is a token of his anger—a testimony of our guilt, a call to repentance and submission, reformation and obedience. It is also a fruit of infinite goodness—a promised covenant blessing to his people. God doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men. He never useth the rod, but when there is an absolute necessity for it, in order to support the

honor of his government and the good of his moral kingdom.—Hence,

3. Whenever the divine rod is inflicted upon us, it should bring all these things to our view. We should hear the rod and Him who hath appointed it. We should feel a deep and thorough conviction of our sins, and strive to humble ourselves in the dust before our God, with a sincere and hearty acknowledgment of his righteousness and our guilt. The soul that is under affliction should eye the hand of God, and feel more affected by his sins than by his sufferings. It should grieve him that he has given the Lord occasion to correct. He should feel and acknowledge from the heart, I have sinned, and God is displeased—I am guilty, and God is just. I accept the punishment of my iniquities. My sufferings are but the proper fruit of my own evil doings.—I deserve all this, and infinitely more at the hands of that holy God whom I have dishonored and provoked. How small a part of that evil do I feel, which my sins have a natural tendency to produce, and which, but for the over ruling power and wisdom of God, would have effected? How just is it therefore, that this portion of it should rebound and alight upon my own guilty head—and how much mercy and tender compassion are to be seen, in that it is no greater. Hence,

4. We may be led to see what resolutions, a soul, thus affected under divine chastisement, will form, and what course pursue for the acquisition of comfort. He will not wrangle

and complain, and charge God foolishly—nor will he sink down inconsolable under the heavy pressure of his grief—nor will he seek to fortify his heart against the keen sensations of distress by a still more impenetrable shield of stupidity—nor will he affect to rise above misfortune, in the pride of that vain philosophy, which refuses to see or acknowledge the hand of providence, and ascribes calamity to *fortune, luck or chance*—nor, will he derive a selfish comfort and satisfaction from the superior sufferings of others—No. He will pursue none of these courses as the line of duty, or the road to comfort; but emptied of himself, and convinced of the insufficiency of the creature, his trust and confidence is in God; for he believes and feels that “righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne.” He looks to himself, and to his God, and is concerned about nothing, but his sin and his duty. His afflictions, instead of driving him from God, bring him nearer to him; and instead of blinding him to himself, remove his stupidity, and open his eyes to a clear view, an heart affecting and soul humbling sense of his own wickedness and guilt. Wide is the difference between the nature of worldly and of godly sorrow; and as different are their effects. The one worketh death—the other worketh repentance unto salvation. There is an unspeakable sweetness in godly sorrow, which none but the good man can taste; and this he may enjoy under trials and afflictions, in a much higher degree than in circumstances of worldly prosperity—

“The soul that’s fill’d with virtue’s light
Shines brightest in affliction’s night,
And sees in darkness, beams of grace.”
WATTS.

Thus while he mourns, he rejoices. His very sorrow is his comfort, and the deeper his repentance, the higher his spiritual joys arise. He longs for a clearer view, and a deeper sense of the evil of sin; and nothing gives him so much comfort, as to abhor himself and repent in dust and ashes. He loves to feel the most humbling sense of his own infinite vileness, and to lie low at the foot of God; and he cannot lie low enough, to satisfy his own feelings.

How different is this from the proud, self exalting, self justifying spirit of the men of the world! How wretchedly mistaken are they in their views, who look upon repentance and sorrow for sin as a gloomy, unhappy and miserable distress of mind, and begetting that pain and anguish, which self condemnation brings to those under the unsubdued power of pride! Whereas, it is directly the reverse, as every true Christian can witness from his own experience. The soul that truly loves holiness, will hate sin, and will feel the highest satisfaction, when in the deepest exercise of repentance. When he has the clearest discoveries of the sinfulness of sin, the glory of Christ is proportionably exalted in his view, and this it is which fills him with joy and peace in believing. When he sees Christ glorified, his soul is satisfied, and he wants no more.

This, the writer conceives to be the true nature, and these the blessed fruits of repentance and

what every holy soul in some degree experiences. This, it is fully believed, constitutes the joys of the blessed above, who dwell in the midst of the paradise of God, and unitedly chaunt that eternal anthem of praise, "Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."

ASAPH.

The Catholic Doctrine of a Trinity, &c.

CHAPTER III.

THE PLURALITY AND TRINITY OF PERSONS.

(Continued from vol. vi. p. 471.)

I.

THE *Hebrew* name so often used in the *Old Testament*, which we have translated by the word *God*, is *Elohim*, a noun substantive of the plural number, regularly formed from its singular, and very frequently joined with plural verbs and plural adjectives, to express a plurality in the divine nature: Though for another obvious reason, it is generally construed with verbs and pronouns of the singular number, and gives a good sense, though the Grammar of it be somewhat irregular.

The *Jews* would persuade us not to consider this word as a plural noun, but on some particular occasions. Whoever will be at the pains to examine their reasoning, will find it to be very childish and inconsistent, wholly owing to their hatred against the divinity of *Jesus Christ*, and the notion of a Trinity. But when the *Jew* is become a *Christian*, and the stumbling-block of the Cross removed out of his way, he can allow the name *Elohim* to be plural as readily as other men; and it is one of the principal points he chuses to insist upon, to convince the world that his eyes are open, and he is sincere in his profession of the *Christian* religion.

John Xerese a *Jew*, converted here in *England* about forty years ago, published a sensible and affectionate address to his unbelieving brethren, wherein he lays before them his reasons for leaving the *Jewish* religion and embracing the *Christian*. "The Christians, (says he*) confess *Jesus* to be *God*; and it is this that makes us look upon the Gospels as books that overturn the very principles of religion, the truth of which is built upon this article, the *Unity of God*. In this argument lies the strength of what you object against the *Christian* religion." Then he undertakes to prove that the unity of *God* is not such as he once understood it to be, an unity of *Person*, but of *Essence*, under which more persons than one are comprehended; and the first proof he offers is that of the name *Elohim*. "Why else, says he†, is that frequent mention of *God* by nouns of the plural number? As in *Gen. i. 1*.

* Page 53.

† Page 57.

"where the word *Elohim*, which is rendered *God*, is of the plural number, though annexed to a verb of the singular number ; which demonstrates as evidently as may be, that there are several persons partaking of the same divine nature and Essence."

II.

Gen. i. 26. And GOD said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness.

No sensible reason can be given, why God should speak of himself in the *plural* number, unless he consists of more persons than one. Dr. Clarke contrived the plan of his *Scripture Doctrine* so as to leave out this difficulty with many more of the same kind. Others there are who tell us it is a figurative way of speaking, only to express the dignity of God, not to denote any *plurality* in him. For they observe it is customary for a king, who is only one person, to speak of himself in the same style. But how absurd is it, that God should borrow his way of speaking from a King, before a man was created upon the earth ! And even granting this to be possible, yet the cases will not agree. For though a King or Governor may say *us* and *we*, there is certainly no figure of speech that will allow any single person to say, *one of us*, when he speaks only of *himself*. It is a phrase that can have no meaning, unless there be more persons than one to chuse out of. Yet this, as we shall find, is the style in which God has spoken of himself in the following article. Though it be impossible to apply this plural expression to any but the Persons of the Godhead, there is a writer who has attempted to turn the force of it by another text, in which, as he says very truly, *the weakness of the argument will appear at sight*. God invites the people by the prophet *Isaiah*, and says, "Come now and *let us reason* together." Chap. i. ver. 18. Upon which he remarks, that, "if this form of expression puts the children of *Israel* upon an equality with God, then we may allow some force in this argument†."

And so we may if it does not. For *let us reason* refers to an act common to all spirits ; and therefore no Christian ever thought of arguing from it. But *let us make man* refers only to an act of the Godhead. All spirits can *reason* : but only the supreme Spirit can *create*. Therefore the author, instead of answering the expression, hath only brought together two texts as widely different as God and man.

If the King were to say to another, "let us *see*," or "let us *breathe*," no man would be so weak as to think that the expression denoted any equality or co-ordination in the person so spoken to. But if he should say, "let us pardon a malefactor condemned by the law," then the expression would admit of such an inference. And the objector might have been aware of these distinctions, if he had not prematurely settled his faith before he had consulted the Holy Scripture.

† See an Appeal to the Common Sense of all Christian People, p. 139.

III.

Gen. iii. 22. And the LORD GOD said, behold the man is become like ONE OF US.

The *Jews* are greatly perplexed with this passage. They endeavor to put it off, by telling us, God must here be understood to speak of himself and his *council*; or as they term it his *house of judgment*, made up of angels, &c. to which there needs no answer but that of the prophet, *who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor* ?*

IV.

Gen. xi. 6, 7. And the LORD said—let us go down and there confound (*Heb.* let us confound) their language.

Another instance of this occurs in *Isaiah* vi. 8. *I heard the voice of the LORD, saying, whom shall I send, and who will go for us ?* Upon the plural word *nobis*, us, there is a short note of *Junius* and *Tremellius*, which contains the substance of all that can be said upon the occasion——“*Nam consilium est Dei Patris, Filii, & Spiritus Sancti*” For this (say they) is a consultation of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.——And it shall be proved to be so, in a proper place, from an inspired comment upon this Chapter of *Isaiah*.

V.

Genes. xx. 13. And it came to pass when GOD caused me to wander from my father's house, &c.

The *Hebrew* is——*Deus errare facerent*——God they caused me to wander : which, however strange it may sound to an *English* hearer, is the strict grammatical rendering of the original. And the expression is affirmed by *Junius* and *Tremellius*, with other commentators out of number, to respect the plurality of the persons in the Godhead. They have a short note upon it to the following effect——*Plurale verbum cum Dei nomine, ad indicandum S. Triados mysterium* : which I mention, not in the way of an *authority*, but only to shew how clear the case is to an *Hebrew* reader, whose mind is without prejudice. And though others may have attempted to conceal such evidence as this under an heap of critical rubbish, yet if we are to come to no resolution till those who dislike the doctrine of a Trinity have done disputing about the words that convey it, the judgment itself would find us undetermined. And if we would but attend to this state of the case, and apply it also to other points of doctrine, I am well convinced it would shorten many of our disputes, and make the word of God a much more easy and intelligible book than it passes for at present.

VI.

Gen. xxv. 7. Because there GOD appeared unto him, &c.

* *Rom. xi. 34.* and *Isaiah xl. 13.*

Here again the *Hebrew* verb is plural—*Deus revelati sunt*—God they appeared, or were revealed to him. So again in 2 Sam. vii. 23.—even like Israel whom God went to redeem: which in the original is—*iverunt Deus ad redimendum*; the verb being in the plural. A celebrated *Latin* translator* of the Old Testament has ventured to render it—*iverunt Dii ad redimendum*: but *Dii* in *Latin* is not answerable to *Elohim* in the *Hebrew*; and, in strictness, may be thought to countenance the notion of *Tritheism* or a plurality of Gods; which is abhorrent from the express doctrine of the scripture; and against which the name *Elohim* is purposely guarded, by its being connected so very often with verbs and pronouns in the singular.

VII.

Deut. iv. 7. What nation is there so great, that hath GOD so nigh unto them? &c.

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Instead of the usual names of God, adjectives expressing some divine attribute are very frequently substituted: and these also occur in the plural, as in the following examples.

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The word *mighty ones*, is never used for *Angels*; and must in this place signify *God*, for the two following reasons: 1. Because *Abir* in the singular is several times used absolutely as a name of *God*; who is called *Abir Israel*, the *mighty one of Israel*, and *Abir Jacob*, the *mighty one of Jacob*. *Gen.* xlix. 24. *Psal.* cxxxii. 2. where the *LXX.* have rendered it *Θεοι*. 2. Because our blessed Saviour, in discoursing upon the *Manna*, *John* vi. 31—33. quotes this part of the *Psalm*, and calls that *the bread of God from heaven*, which in the *Psalm* itself is called the *bread of the mighty*. Therefore *Abirim* is put for *Elohim*, and is taken in the plural because *God* is plural.

IX.

Dan. iv. 26. And whereas *THEY* commanded to leave the stump of the tree-roots, &c.

At the 13th verse of this chapter we read only of one *watcher* or *holy one* coming down from heaven, of whom it is said that *HE* cried—*leave the stump of his roots in the earth*. Yet the number is here very remarkably changed from *he said* to *they commanded*. And though the words of the curse upon *Nebuchadnezzar* were pronounced by *A watcher* and *An holy one*, in the singular; nevertheless, at the close of the speech, this matter is declared to be by the decree of the *WATCHERS* and the demand by the word of the *HOLY ONES*.* Now it is very certain that the judgments of *God* are not founded upon the decree and word of *Angels*, or of any created beings; therefore this *watcher* could be no created angel, but a person in the Lord *Jehovah*, who condescends to watch over† his people, and is called the *keeper of Israel*, that neither slumbereth nor sleepeth. The change of these verbs and nouns from the singular to the plural, can be accounted for upon no other principle: it is a case to which there is no parallel in any language, and such as can be reconcileable only to the Being of *God*, who is *one* and *many*. We are to collect from it, that in this, as in every act of the Godhead, there was a consent and concurrence of the persons in the Trinity; and though there was *one* only who spake, it was the word and decree of *all*. There is an instance of this sort in the New-Testament. The Disciples of *Christ* were commanded to baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. And, without doubt, the baptism they administered was in all cases agreeable to the

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prescribed form. Nevertheless we are told of some, who were commanded to be baptised in the name of the Lord*, and particularly, in the name of the Lord Jesus† so that there was a strange defect either in the baptism itself, or in the account we have of it; or the mention of one person in the Trinity must imply the presence, name, and authority of them all; as the passage is understood by Irenæus—in *Christi nomine subauditur qui unxit, & qui unctus est, & ipsa unctio in qua unctus est.* Lib. III. cap. 20.

X.

Dan. v. 18. The most high GOD gave to *Nebuchadnezzar* a kingdom and majesty and glory and honour.

Ver. 20. And THEY took his glory from him.

Here again, the word *they* is a plain relative to the *most high God*. Nor can it otherwise be agreeable to the sense of the history, or the reason of the thing itself, considered as a matter of fact. For who was it that took away the glory of the king? It was not the work of men, but a supernatural act of the *most high God*; to whom *Nebuchadnezzar* himself hath ascribed it—those that walk in pride HE is able to abase.

I might here subjoin in proof of a plurality, those numerous passages of the Old Testament, wherein God is spoken of, or speaks of himself, as of *more persons than one*. I will produce a few of them, to shew that such are not wanting. *Gen. xix. 24.* The Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven. *Psal. cx. 1.* The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand, &c. *Dan. ix. 17.* Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant—for the Lord's sake. *Prov. xxx. 4.* Who hath established all the ends of the earth? What is his name, and what is his Son's name, if thou canst tell? *Isai. x. 12.* When the Lord hath performed his whole work upon Jerusalem I will punish, &c. *Ibid. xiii. 13.* I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the Lord of Hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger. *Ibid. xxii. 19.* And I will drive thee from thy station, and from thy state shall he pull thee down. *Ibid. lxiv. 4.* Neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him. *Hos. i. 7.* I will have mercy upon the house of Judah, and will save them by the Lord their God. *Zech. ii. 10, 11.* I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord; and many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day and shall be my people; and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the Lord of Hosts hath sent me unto thee. *Ibid. x. 12.* And I will strengthen them in the Lord, and they shall walk up and down in his name, saith the Lord.

The Passages hitherto produced in this Chapter are designed only to prove an indefinite plurality in God. In the remaining part of it, I shall bring forward another class of texts, which shews this plurality to be a Trinity.

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(To be continued.)

III.

Gen. iii. 22. And the LORD GOD said, behold the man is become like ONE OF US.

The *Jews* are greatly perplexed with this passage. They endeavor to put it off, by telling us, God must here be understood to speak of himself and his *council*; or as they term it his *house of judgment*, made up of angels, &c. to which there needs no answer but that of the prophet, *who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor* ?*

IV.

Gen. xi. 6, 7. And the LORD said—let us go down and there confound (*Heb.* let us confound) their language.

Another instance of this occurs in *Isaiah vi. 8.* *I heard the voice of the LORD, saying, whom shall I send, and who will go for us ?* Upon the plural word *nobis*, us, there is a short note of *Junius* and *Tremellius*, which contains the substance of all that can be said upon the occasion——“*Nam consilium est Dei Patris, Filii, & Spiritus Sancti*” For this (say they) is a consultation of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.——And it shall be proved to be so, in a proper place, from an inspired comment upon this Chapter of *Isaiah*.

V.

Genes. xx. 13. And it came to pass when GOD caused me to wander from my father's house, &c.

The *Hebrew* is——*Deus errare facerent*——God they caused me to wander : which, however strange it may sound to an *English* hearer, is the strict grammatical rendering of the original. And the expression is affirmed by *Junius* and *Tremellius*, with other commentators out of number, to respect the plurality of the persons in the Godhead. They have a short note upon it to the following effect——*Plurale verbum cum Dei nomine, ad indicandum S. Triados mysterium* : which I mention, not in the way of an *authority*, but only to shew how clear the case is to an *Hebrew* reader, whose mind is without prejudice. And though others may have attempted to conceal such evidence as this under an heap of critical rubbish, yet if we are to come to no resolution till those who dislike the doctrine of a Trinity have done disputing about the words that convey it, the judgment itself would find us undetermined. And if we would but attend to this state of the case, and apply it also to other points of doctrine, I am well convinced it would shorten many of our disputes, and make the word of God a much more easy and intelligible book than it passes for at present.

VI.

Gen. xxv. 7. Because there GOD appeared unto him, &c.

* *Rom. xi. 34.* and *Isaiah xl. 13.*

Here again the Hebrew verb is plural—*Deus revelati sunt*—God they appeared, or were revealed to him. So again in 2 Sam. vii. 23.—even like Israel whom God went to redeem : which in the original is—*iverunt Deus ad redimendum* ; the verb being in the plural. A celebrated Latin translator* of the Old Testament has ventured to render it—*iverunt Dii ad redimendum* : but *Dii* in Latin is not answerable to *Elohim* in the Hebrew ; and, in strictness, may be thought to countenance the notion of *Tritheism* or a plurality of Gods ; which is abhorrent from the express doctrine of the scripture ; and against which the name *Elohim* is purposely guarded, by its being connected so very often with verbs and pronouns in the singular.

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From the Christian Observer.

The Death-Bed of a modern Free-Thinker, exemplified in the last hours of the Honorable Francis Newport, son to the late Lord Newport.

AT sixteen the honourable Francis Newport was sent to the University, perfectly acquainted with the Latin and Greek languages ; where he continued five years, and behaved so agreeably to his religious education, that he was looked upon as a blessing and ornament to his family.

At twenty-one he came to London, and entered himself at—, to study the law. His new acquaintance began to rally him for his religion : to whom he would say, "Gentlemen, you who pretend to reason, cannot count laughter a conclusive argument ; if religion be so absurd, as you would have me believe, why do not you give some fair reasons against it ?" This some of them would attempt ; and though their arguments at first were as unsuccessful as their raillery, yet the poison sunk by degrees, and at last tainted him as deeply as themselves. He was adopted into their society, which met to lay down rules for being so critically wicked, that the law should not be able to take hold of them. He had too much prudence to lay himself open : he still kept a fair correspondence with his friends, and in strange places was sober and reserved ; but in secret, and among his acquaintance, he was as wicked as good parts, abundance of temptations, and a fair estate, enabled him to be.

When he was taken ill, he

found, notwithstanding all his precautions, that he had not shook off the expectations of another life.

This made him throw himself upon a bed, and break out into these expressions : "Whence this war in my breast ? What argument is there now to assist me against matter of fact ? Do I assert that there is no hell, while I feel one in my own bosom ? Am I certain there is no after-retribution, when I feel a present judgment ? Do I affirm my soul to be as mortal as my body, when this languishes, and that is vigorous as ever ? O ! that any one could restore me to my ancient guard of piety and innocence ! Wretch that I am ! whither shall I fly from this breast ? what will become of me ?"

One of his old companions coming in, said, "How now, brother ! why this ? why this melancholy posture ? what is the matter ?" He replied, "It is you and your companions who have instilled your principles into me, which now, when I have most need of them, leave me in confusion and despair. What advice or comfort have you now to fortify me with, against the fearful expectations of another life ? Are you sure that the soul is material and mortal, and that it will dissolve with the body ?" — "So certain," replied the other, "that I venture my whole upon it."

Here I interrupted them by coming into the room ; and, applying myself to the sick person, told him, I was a stranger to him, but hearing he was ill, I thought it my duty to offer him what service I was capable of. "I thank you," says he ;

"I desire you to engage that gentleman that sits there, and prove to him that the soul is not matter nor mortal." This I endeavored to do by several arguments ; to which the sick gentleman answered only with a sigh, whilst his friend made haste out of the room. I was surprised at such an effect ; and desired to know the reason.—

"Alas ! Sir, said he, you have undeceived me too late ; I was afraid of nothing so much as the immortality of the soul : now you have assured me of that, you have ascertained me of a hell, and a portion among those who have apostatized from their Religion. You have now sealed my damnation, by giving me an earnest of it ; I mean an awakened conscience, that brings my sins into remembrance, by reckoning up the numerous catalogue, for which I must go and give an account. O ! apostate wretch, from what hopes art thou fallen ? O that I had never known what Religion was ; then I had never denied my Saviour, nor been so black an heir of perdition !"

I stood speechless some time at the strange expressions ; but, as soon as I could recollect myself, said, "Sir, I would have you take care how you violate the mercy of God, and think so lightly of the sufferings of CHRIST, as if they were not sufficient for the redemption of the greatest sinners. This may be a delusion of the devil : if you are convinced the soul is immortal, I hope it is to a good end ; if you had died ignorant of it, you had been miserably undeceived in another world ; now you have some time to prepare for your welfare."

To which he replied—"As to the mercies of God in CHRIST, I once knew and tasted what they were ; which is now part of my curse, in that I am now sensible of my loss : they are, I grant you, sufficient for those that have any share in them ; but what is that to me, who have denied Christ ? I have daily crucified him afresh, and put him to an open shame. The devil has nothing to do with the torture I undergo ; it is no delusion of his, but the just judgment of God ; and it is also a part of my heavy judgment, that you have given me a sensible horror of my sin, by proving my soul is immortal. Had I gone strait to hell in my old opinion, I had endured but one hell, whereas I now feel two ; I mean not only an inexpressible torture which I carry in my own breast, but an expectation of I know not what change. O that I were in hell, that I might feel the worst ! and yet I fear to die, because the worst will never have an end." All this he spoke with an air of eagerness, and such horror as is scarce to be imagined.

He was got to bed, refusing all sustenance, and had an exceeding sweating through the extremity of his torments.

Before I took my leave of him, I desired to pray by him ; which with much reluctance he consented to. In the midst of prayer, he groaned extremely, tossing himself as if he was in the agonies of death. When prayer was over, I asked him the reason of it.

He answered—"As the damned in hell, who lift up their eyes in torments, and behold afar off the saints in Abraham's

bosom, have thereby their torments doubled, first, by reflecting on the misery they are in ; and, secondly, by observing the happiness they have lost : so I, knowing myself to be hardened, and sealed to damnation, hearing the prayers of the righteous, to which God's ears are ever open ; this increases my torment, to think how I am excluded from such a privilege, and have no other portion left me than blaspheming, weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth for ever."

"Pray, Sir, said I, "consider there is a vast difference between you and them in hell ; they are lost irrecoverably for evermore, without any opportunity of a reprieve, or hope of pardon ; you are yet alive, and have the promises in common with other sinners : Christ died for sinners ; and God hath sworn by himself, *As I live saith the Lord, I would not the death of a sinner ; but would rather that he turn from his wickedness, and live.*"

He replied, with his usual earnestness, "I will grant as much difference between me and those in hell, as between a common devil and a devil incarnate : if these are irrecoverably lost, without opportunity of reprieve or hopes of pardon, and I am yet alive, what then ? what is the consequence ? Not that the promises belong in common to me with other sinners, nor to any sinners, but such as believe and repent. If Christ died for sinners, it was such as repent and believe ; but though I would, I can do neither : I have outstood my day of grace, am hardened and reprobate. If God delight not in

the death of sinners, it is of such sinners as repent and turn to him ; but his justice will vindicate itself on such obstinate sinners as me, who have denied his power and providence both in my words and actions. Now he has met with me for it ; and O ! it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. If God was not against me, I should not care though all the power and malice of men were joined against me ; though all the legions of hell continued to torture me with the most consuming pains : but when an irreconcilable God looks down upon his creature in wrath, and consigns him over to eternal vengeance, this is intolerable, inexpressible ! ah, who can dwell with eternal burnings ? Oh, ye that have any hope, that have not yet passed the day of grace, cry mightily to God day and night : think no labor too much to secure you from the wrath of God. O ! who can stand before him when he is angry ? What stubble can resist that consuming fire ?" This, and more to the same purpose, he spoke with so deep a concern, the tears all the while trickling down his face, that no one in the room could forbear weeping.—Which he perceiving, said, "If ye weep at the image and bare relation of the effects of God's wrath, what then do I suffer, who actually lie under the very weight of his fury ? Refrain your tears, for it is in vain : pity is no debt to me ; nothing is so proper for me as some curse to complete my misery, and free me from the torment of expectation." Here he paused a while ; then looking towards the fire, he said, "Oh, that I was to lie

and broil upon that fire a thousand years, to purchase the favor of God, and be reconciled to him again ! But it is a fruitless wish ; millions of millions of years will bring me no nearer the end of my torments than one poor hour. Oh, eternity, eternity ; who can discover the abyss of eternity ? Who can paraphrase upon these words, *for ever and ever ?*"

It began to grow late ; so I took my leave of him for that night, promising to come again the next day ; when, I found his mind in the same condition still, but his body much weakened : there were with him three or four divines, who had been at prayer : which, they told me, had the same uneasy effect upon him as before.

One of them reminded him that Peter denied his Master with oaths and curses, and was yet received again into his favor.

He replied, " It is true, Peter did deny his Master, as I have done, but what then ? His Master prayed for him, that his faith should not fail ; accordingly he looked him into repentance, and assisted him by his Spirit to perfect it. Now, if he would assist me to repent, I should do so too ; but he has justly withdrawn his intercession from me : I have grieved his Holy Spirit so often, that he has taken him from me, and in the room thereof has left me the spirit of impenitence and reprobation ; and given me a certain earnest of a fearful inheritance in another life." He spoke little more that day ; much company pressing towards night, orders were given to prevent it : at six of the clock, we all looked upon one another

to know what course to take, no text being offered in his favor, but which he turned another way.

While we were thus musing, he cried out with the utmost vehemence, " How long, O Lord, shall thy wrath burn for ever against me ? Shall thy eternal justice exact upon a poor, despicable worm ? What is my value or worth, that thou shouldest pour out full vials of wrath upon me ? Oh, that thou wouldest let go thy hand for ever, forget, and let me fall into my first nothing ! As my righteousness could have profited thee nothing, so my impieties can have done thee no hurt ; therefore annihilate me, and let me perish. Be not angry that I thus expostulate with thee ; it will be but a little while before thy wrath shall force the dreadfulest blasphemies from me. Oh, that thou wouldest take away my being or misery : neither can increase or diminish thy happiness ; and therefore let them both cease, and let my name be known no more. But if I must be, and be immortal, and thou wilt punish me because I have despised thee, let a privation of thought suffice, and let me pass my eternity in a dream, without ever being awakened by the pangs of torment, or by the gnawing of the worm that never dies. But, oh, fruitless desires ! I am expostulating with a God that for ever hath shut out my prayers ; and only protracts my breath a little longer, to make me an example to others. O ! ye rocks and mountains, that ye would cover and hide me from the wrath of an incensed God : but I cannot flee from his presence :

what he hath begun he will finish. He will extend his wrath against me for ever and ever."

Here some one knocked at the door, and it proved to be the postman, with a letter for him : which being told him, "How," said he, "a letter for me ! A little longer, and I expect another sort of message : I am very shortly to give an account of every secret action I have done ; and I have a mind to make an experiment to see how I can bear it. Pray, Sir," added he to me, "do me the favor to read me this letter. The contents I know not, but I suspect it comes from some of my old acquaintance." I desired to be excused, alleging there might be something in it improper to be divulged. "Nothing," replied he, "can affect me now ; I have no honor, no reputation, and, what is yet worse, no heaven to lose by this or any other act." Upon this I broke it open. The letter received was as follows :

DEAREST SIR,

"Understanding you are dangerously ill, and that it has had a melancholy effect upon you, I could not (considering our strict friendship) but endeavor to remove those evils your mind may be under ; which perhaps is an office no less grateful, than making the body sound. Sickness and death are the common lot of mankind ; and to repine and grieve at this lot, is to combat the laws of nature, and fight against impossibilities. What wise man repines at the heat in summer, or the cold in winter ? A common evil ceases to be an evil. But perhaps your melancholy suggests to you, that it is a dismal thing to launch into an unknown abyss. I an-

swer : Sometimes I dream of dreadful things, but when I awake, all vanishes. Thus if we examine death and its consequences by our reason, those formidable monsters grow tame and familiar to us. I would demand of him who asks me, what estate I shall be in after death ? What estate he was in before life ? Pain and pleasure will leave their impressions upon a human spirit. If I was either happy or miserable before I was born, I must still retain the impression : but I do not now, therefore I shall not hereafter : I came out of nothing, and shall return into it. As the flame of an extinguished candle dissolves and loses itself in the circumambient air, even so the taper of life vanishes into æther, and is no more, when once the laws of the vital union are broken.—Death itself is nothing, and after death is nothing ; take courage, man : either die like yourself, master of your own fate and happiness, so long as it is to be kept ; or else recover, and live worthy the character of a person, who knows how either to live or die. So wishes, &c."

This letter was but fuel to the tormenting flame before in the breast of the sick gentleman ; who immediately dictated the following answer :

SIR,

"Being not able to use my own, I have borrowed another hand, to answer yours. You say well, it is a more grateful office to endeavor to remove the disorders of the mind than of the body. What you urge of the common lot of mankind, as death and sickness, I could wish were my case ; but my affliction is, that despair and hell are the

common lot of Atheists. Now your argument cannot reach my case, unless you first prove that Atheism is as inevitable as death and sickness, and that therefore the effects of it are to be borne patiently, unless a man will combat necessity, and fight against the laws of fate. I have formerly used this way of arguing myself, but wonder now how I could ever think it conclusive. You say, that if we examine death and its supposed consequences by our reason, these formidable monsters grow tame and familiar : if, by our reason, you mean either that peculiar to Atheists, or the common reason of human nature, I am sure these monsters will grow less tame and familiar the more we think of them : since no reason shews what an unexperienced death is, or what the change consequent upon it, how can we judge if things we do not know? Reason on such things as long as you please, and you will be at last as far from the truth as when you began. Your argument is extremely weak about a pre-existent and a future state : I retain no impression of past happiness or misery, therefore there is none to come ; how that is a consequence, I do not see. Next you would have me believe, upon your bare word, that death is nothing, and after death is nothing : pray, how do you know, having not yet tried? There are a great many that say the contrary. I have only concerned myself with the rationality of your letter, that you may believe I am not distracted ; which I would desire you to believe, that what I am going to say may not have less weight with you.

It is true, and whether you believe it or not, you will find it so at last ; if I could force you to believe it I would : all I can do is, to deal with you as a reasonable creature, by opening my breast to you, and then leaving you at your liberty to act as you please. While we are in health and business, we may act contrary to our intentions, and plead for the thing we believe not ; but when we come to die, the vizard is taken off, and the man appears as he is. This is my condition, and therefore I can have no motive to impose upon my friends. Religion is no impostor, heaven and hell are real, and the immortality of the soul as certain as the existence of the body : for a time we have officiously deluded and cheated ourselves out of Religion and happiness ; and God, who will not always be despised by his creatures, has chosen me as an example to you all, and a warning to the lazy and indifferent Christian. But who, alas ! can write his own tragedy without tears, or copy out the seal of his own damnation without horror ! That there is a God, I know, because I continually feel the effects of his wrath : that there is a *hell*, I am equally certain, having received an earnest of my inheritance there already in my breast : that there is a natural conscience, I now feel with horror and amazement, being continually upbraided by it with my impieties, and with all my sins brought to my remembrance. Why God has marked me out for an example of his vengeance, rather than you or any other of our acquaintance, I presume, is, because I have been more reli-

giously educated, and have done greater despite to the Spirit of Grace. What egregious folly is it for dust and ashes to contend with its Creator, to question his justice, his power, yea, his very Being ; when at the same time, without this God, every such wretch would immediately fall into nothing, being without him not able to exist one moment ? What vile ingratitude is it scurrilously to reflect on his Religion, who died to reconcile such reflecters to himself ? Do not mistake yourself ; it is not a light matter to contend with the God of Nature, to abuse Religion, and deny its Author, and (what is worst of all) to apostatize from it, as I have done. God has met with me for it, after a long forbearance of my inveterate impieties and profaneness. Let me intreat you to leave off your sins ; who knows but God may yet receive you ? I speak not this out of any love to virtue, or hatred to vice (for I am hardened and impenitently reprobate) ; but, like Dives, I am unwilling my brethren should come into this place of torment. Make what use of this you please ; only remember, that if it does not reclaim it will enhance your guilt, possibly to be overtaken in this world, as I am by the just judgment of God ; if not, be sure you will be met with hereafter, which is all, from, &c."

As soon as the letter was read and sent, the night being far worn, we all took our leave of him, wishing him good rest, and a happier condition the next day. To which he replied, "Gentlemen, I thank you, but my happiness is at an end ; and

as for my rest to night, thus I spend the little remainder of my miserable moments. All the ease I expect will be wishing for the day, as in the day-time I wish for the night, and in a fearful expectation of my dissolution, and the account I must make upon it. But, Gentlemen, good night to you ; and remember me, to confirm you in the Religion I have disowned, that you may stand more cautiously by my folly, and secure the happiness I have forfeited."

The next day came several of his friends out of the country. Having had an account of his circumstances, one of them told him that he and several more of his relations came to town, and were sorry to find him in so weak a condition as he appeared to be in ; for now he was nothing but skin and bone, the agonies he lay under doing the work of the quickest consumption.

He answered, "I am obliged in common civility to thank you all : but who are my relations ? Our Saviour said, such as did the will of his heavenly Father were his relations. I may properly say, that none but the Atheists, the reprobate, and such as do the work of the devil, are my relations. This little tie of flesh and blood will dissolve in a moment, but the relation I have with the damned is permanent. The same lot, the same place of torment, the same exercise of blasphemy, and the same eternity of horror, will be the common lot of us all ; so the similitude of torments, place, and duration, will join us in a very strict union."

His friends, who only had

heard he was distracted, hearing him deliver himself in such terms were amazed, and began to enquire of some of us, what made him talk at such a rate? He, hearing them whispering together, and imagining the cause, called them all to him, and said,

“ You imagine me melancholy or distracted : I wish I were either ; but it is part of my judgment that I am not. No ; my apprehension of persons and things is rather more quick and vigorous, than it was when I was in perfect health ; and it is my curse, because thereby I am more sensible of the condition I am fallen into. Would you be informed why I am become a skeleton in three or four days ? See now then I have despised my Maker, and denied my Redeemer ; I have joined myself to the Atheists and profane, and continued this course under many convictions, till my iniquity was ripe for vengeance, and the just judgments of God overtook me, when my security was the greatest, and the checks of my conscience were the least. Since I have denied that salvation which cometh by Jesus Christ, there is no other Mediator or Intercessor for sinners ; if there be, which is he that can redeem my soul from hell, or give a ransom for my life ? No, no ; ‘ if we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more sacrifice for sin, but a fearful looking-for of judgment and fiery indignation to consume the adversary.’ ‘ There remains no more sacrifice for sin,’ that is the wound that pierces my soul. CHRIST JESUS was the only expiatory sacrifice God

would accept ; I not accepting, I would say, I despising this, there remains no other for me to accept of, no other to make atonement and satisfaction for me ; there is no other name given under heaven but the name of JESUS, whereby we may be saved, and it is that JESUS whom I have reproached, and ridiculed, and abused in his members ; nay, to whom I have induced others to do the same. Methinks your breasts are all open to me, and, in the midst of your pity and surprise, you would bid me hope and believe, and supplicate the mercy I have abused, because JESUS CHRIST came to save sinners, and to bring to repentance. In that I know all your thoughts. Alas, how fain would I hope and believe ! Can a man in torments not desire to be freed from them ? No, assure yourselves I would upon any terms ; but the wrath of God obstructs the power of hoping and believing, and though I would, I can do neither. I know not what some divines mean, who say, *He that desires to repent, does it in some measure* ; I experience the contrary. A fruitless wish that comes not into act, is no more than a conviction which shall lay such persons under great condemnation. You would have me supplicate that mercy I have abused. Alas, of that I have no hopes, but what depend upon abused mercy ! But why said I hopes ? I have no hopes ! My hopes are frustrated, my expectations are cut off ; and what remains behind ? Why am I bid to hope and believe ? Oh, what mockery is this upon me ! To find me in misery and bid me be happy, without affording me any

power of being so ! Indeed, should JESUS CHRIST say so to me, it would be comfort ; but for you to say so, is the same thing as to bid a malefactor shake off his chains, and assume his liberty ; or call up the dead to rise out of their graves, and challenge their estates and honors again. How idle is it to bid the fire not burn when fuel is administered, and command the seas to be smooth in the midst of a storm ! Such is my case ; and what are the comforts of my friends ? But I am spent, I can complain no more. Would to God that the cause of my complaining would cease ! The cause of my complaining ? this renews my grief, and summons up the little strength I have left to complain again, like an expiring blaze, before it is extinguished. It is just so with me : but whither am I going ?”

As he said this, he fainted away, and lay in a swoon for a considerable time ; but, by the help of some spirits, we brought him to himself again. As soon as he had opened his eyes, he said, “ Oh, cruel, unkind friends, to awaken me from a dream, in which I had a cessation from my torments !” This he spoke with so lively a concern, that no one could refrain from tears. “ You weep,” said he, “ but your tears come too late. Was I like another person that goes out of the world, it would be one of my greatest troubles to see you weep, or at best it would add to my pains ; for he must be unnatural and senseless that would not be troubled at the afflictions of others, especially his friends and relations. But the case is otherwise with me. My cup is full, and runs over already ; the bitter-

ness of my soul is as great as it possibly can be in this world ; my heart is full of horror and anguish ; no grief can add to mine, being so great, that it is incapable of receiving more.— Perhaps this may seem a paradox to you at first ; but what think you of time, and eternity which comprehends and swallows up all time ? Can any one add any thing to the wrath of God, which includes the fury of devils and men ; this being derivative from, and independent of that ? And can any one add to my grief and torture, who am fallen into the hands of the living God ? No, no ; reserve your tears for your sins, and cast them not away upon one who is neither the better nor the worse for them.” You may easily imagine what impressions this would make upon the spirits of his friends. However, in the midst of their grief and amazement, they had the prudence to think of the reputation of their family, and provide for as much secrecy as was possible.

They therefore conveyed him by night to new lodgings. But he was grown so weak, that he fainted away several times in the chair ; they got him into his chamber, and to bed, as soon as they could. After a little rest, he yet found strength to express himself thus :

“ I am not concerned to know whither you have brought me, or your reasons for so doing.— It had been something, if you had changed my state with my lodgings : but my torments are greater than before ; for I see that dismal hour just at hand, when I must bid you all farewell.”

The physicians were now sent for again, but they still declared

they could do nothing for him ; they ordered him some cordial julep, which, they said, might strengthen nature to hold out two or three days longer.

My business calling me away for a day or two, I came again on Thursday morning pretty early ; when I came in, I enquired of his friend how he spent his time. They told me he had had little company : and his expressions were much shorter than before : but what he did speak seemed to have more horror and despair than before. I went to his bed-side, and asked him how he did ?

He replied. " Damned and lost for ever." I told him, the decrees of God were secret ; perhaps he was punished in this life to fit him for a better. He answered, " They are not secret to me, but discovered ; and my greatest torment, my punishment here, is for an example to others. Oh, that there was no God, or that this God could cease to be, for I am sure he will have no mercy upon me !" — " Alas," said I " there is no contending with our Creator, and therefore avoid such words as may provoke him more." — " True," replied he, " there is no contending ; I wish there were a possibility of getting above God, that would be a heaven to me." I entreated him not to give way to such blasphemous thoughts, for——. Here he interrupted me. " Read we not in the Revelations of them that blasphemed God, because of their pains ? I am one of their number. Oh, how do I envy the happiness of Cain and Judas !" — " But," replied I, " you are yet alive, and do not feel

the torments of those that are in hell."

He answered, " This is either true or false ; if it be true, how heavy will those torments be, of which I do not yet feel the uttermost ? But I know it is false, and that I endure more than the spirits of the damned ; for I have the very same torture upon my spirits that they have, besides those I endure in my body. I believe at the day of judgment the torments of my mind and body will both together be more intense ; but as I now am, no spirit in hell endures what I do. How gladly would I change my condition for hell ! How earnestly would I entreat my angry Judge to send me thither, were I not afraid that out of vengeance he would deny me !" Here he closed his eyes a little, and began to talk very wildly, every now and then groaning and gnashing his teeth : but soon after, opening his eyes, he grew sensible again, and felt his own pulse, saying, " How lazily my minutes go on ! When will be the last breath, the last pulse, that shall beat my spirit out of this decayed mansion, into the desired regions of death and hell ? Oh, I find it is just now at hand ! and what shall I say now ? Am not I afraid to die ? Ah, the forlorn hopes of him that has not God to go to ! Nothing to fly to for peace and comfort !" Here his speech failed him : we all believing him to be dying, went to prayer ; which threw him into an agony ; in which, though he could not speak, he turned away his face, and made what noise he could to hinder himself from hearing.— Perceiving this we gave over.

As soon as he could speak

(which was not till after some time) he said, "Tigers and monsters, are ye also become devils to torment me, and give a prospect of heaven, to make my hell more intolerable?"

"Alas, Sir," said I, "it is our desire of your happiness that casts us down at the throne of grace; if God denies assistance, who else can give it? if he will not have mercy, whither must we go for it?"

He replied, "Oh, that is the dart that wounds me! God is become my enemy, and there is none so strong as to deliver me out of his hands. He consigns me over to eternal vengeance, and there is none able to redeem me!"

Was there such another God as he, who would patronize my cause; or was I above God, or independent on him; could I act or dispose of myself as I pleased; then would my horrors cease, and the expectations and designs of my formidable enemies be frustrated. But oh! this cannot be, for I —."

His voice failed again, and he began to struggle and gasp for breath; which having recovered, with a groan so dreadful and horrid, as if it had been more than human, he cried out, OH, THE UNSUFFERABLE PANGS OF HELL AND DAMNATION!" and then expired.

V. D.



Donations to the Missionary Society of Connecticut.

June 3.	A friend of Missions, Westville, N. Y.	3 00
17.	Do. in Canton,	1
19.	A maiden lady of Stamford,	4 25